

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01760 241816Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 AID-05 PC-01 TRSE-00 /054 W
-----022496 241828Z /53

O 241700Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6529

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 1760

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CO
SUBJECT: UPDATED OUTLOOK FOR THE FEBRUARY 26 ELECTIONS

REF: BOGOTA 900

1. THE EMBASSY'S FORECAST IN REFTEL REGARDING THE CONTEST BETWEEN LIBERAL PARTY PRE-CANDIDATES TURBAY AND LLERAS, THE CHIEF INTEREST IN THE FEBRUARY 26 ELECTION, STILL STANDS; TURBAY'S CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES WILL PROBABLY WIN OVER THOSE OF LLERAS BY A RELATIVELY NARROW MARGIN (100-200,000 VOTES). IN AN ELECTION CHARACTERIZED BY ABSENTEEISM OF AROUND 60PCT.

A

2. THE FINAL THOUGH UNOFFICIAL RESULTS MAY NOT BE KNOWN UNTIL THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 28. THE INITIAL COUNT ON THE 27TH SHOULD HAVE LLERAS IN THE LEAD, SINCE HE IS EXPECTED TO WIN IN BOGOTA AND IN MEDELLIN AS WELL (ALTHOUGH LLERISTAS THERE ARE REPORTEDLY DESPONDENT OVER LOCAL OFFICIAL HARASSMENT AGAINST THEM). IN OTHER MAJOR CITIES, INDEPENDENT HOLMES TURJILLO WILL WIN IN CALI AND TURBAY IN BARRANQUILLA WHILE LLERAS MAY WIN IN SEVERAL OTHER DEPARTMENTS, SUCH AS BOYACA AND THE TWO SANTANDERS, TURBAY IS EXPECTED TO ROLL UP HEAVY MAJORITIES IN VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE NORTH COAST DEPARTMENTS, WNOUGH TO WIN HIM THE LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION. TURBAY HAS CLAIMED PRIVATELY THAT HE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01760 241816Z

EXPECTS TO EAT LLERAS BY 500,000 VOTES.

3. THE CAMPAIGN IN THE LIBERAL PARTY HAS BEEN MARKED BY BITTER RANCOR BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE TURBAY AND LLERAS CAMPS WHICH HAS POISONED FRIENDSHIPS OF ANCIENT VINTAGE. WHICHEVER OF THE TWO WINS, HE WILL CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN THE JUNE 4 ELECTIONS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF A LARGE PART OF THE OTHER

FACTION, THUS IMPROVING THE CHANCES OF A VICTORY FOR CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE BELISARIO BETQKCUR. TURBAY HAS PRIVATELY

CLAIMED THAT LLERAS, PERSONALLY, STARTED RUMORS OF TURBAY'S CONNECTIONS WITH THE MAFIA. LLERAS' LONG STANDING DISDAIN FOR TURBAY AND MANY OF HIS FOLLOWERS HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE CAMPAIGN AND LLERAS HAS ALSO CHARGED GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ON TURBAY'S BEHALF, MOST RECENTLY IN A BITING PERSONAL ATTACK ON PRESIDENT LOPEZ IN LLERAS' WEEKLY NUEVA FRONTERA OF FEBRUARY WWN WHICH WAS REPRINTED IN THE MAJOR LIBERAL DAILIES OF THE SAME DATE. WHILE LOPEZ HAS DENIED SIMILAR CHARGES BY LEFTIST PARTIES HE HAS NOT YET DEIGNED TO REPLY TO LLERAS' ACCUSATIONS.

4. A KEY QUESTION IS WHAT COURSE LLERAS WILL TAKE IF, AS SOME PREDICT, TURBAY WERE TO WIN BY LESS THAN 50,000 VOTES AMIDST LLERISTA CHARGES OF GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AGAINST THEM. IN A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBOFF ON FEBRUARY 22, AUGUSTO ESPINOSA, LLERAS' NATIONAL COORDINATOR, SAID THAT SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WOULD PLACE INTO QUESTION THE SAN CARLOS AGREEMENT, WHEREBY LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL PRE-CANDIDATES AGREED TO ABIDE BY THE RESULTS OF THE FEBRUARY 26 ELECTION TO DETERMINE THE PARTY'S CANDIDACY. ESPINOSA SAID, HOWEVER, THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE AS TO WHAT SPECIFIC COURSE OF ACTION LLERAS MIGHT ADOPT, INCLUDING WHETHER HE MIGHT DISCREETLY SUPPORT THE PRESIDENTIAL BID IN JUNE OF RETIRED GENERAL ALVARO VALENCIA TOVAR, IDEOLOGICALLY AKIN TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 01760 241816Z

LLERAS. COLLABORATORS OF VALENCIA HAVE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT HE AND LLERAS HAVE MET ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. VALENCIA, WHO HAS SET UP HIS OWN MODEST CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION, THE MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL RENEWAL (MNR), IS WELL TCMOUGHT OF IN CIVILIAN CIRCLES BUT, ON HIS OWN, WILL NOT AFFECT THE JUNE ELECTORAL OUTCOME. WITH LLERISTA SUPPORT, HOWEVER, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DRAW ENOUGH LIBERAL VOTES FROM TURBAY TO ELECT A CONSERVATIVE PRESIDENT. DESPITE HIS ANITPATHY FOR TURBAY, IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT LLERAS WOULD TAKE A POSITIVE ACTION THAT WULD HELP TO ELECT A CONSERVATIVE TO THE PRESIDENCY.

5. A REPORTED 100 MILLION PESOS HAS BEEN SPENT ON TURBAY'S CAMPAIGN, WHICH WOULD BE THE LARGEST CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE SINCE THE 40 MILLION PESOS SPENT ON MISAEL PASTRANA'S SUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN 1970. TURBAY'S DETRACTORS HAVE MADE THIS COMPARISON AND HAVE PRIVATELY ALLEGED THAT SUCH A VAST SUM CULD ONLY BE MADE UP BY MASSIVE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE MAFIA. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THE GREATED PART OF TURBAY' FUNDS HAVE PROBABLY COME FROM INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL NON-MAFIA CONTRIBUTORS. MAFIA CONTRIBUTORS WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO INDIVIDUAL CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES, WHERE THEY WOULD GET MORE LEVERAGE FOR THEIR MONEY.

BY HELPING CONGRESSIONAL NADIDATES ON TURBAY'S LISTS, THEY WOULD IN ADDITION BE ASSISTTING TURBAY TO GET THE NOMINATION. ALSO, A COMPARISON BETWEEN 1970 AND 1978 CONTRIBUTIONS IS HARDLY VALID. ALLOWING FOR INFLATION, TURBAY'S 100 MILLION PESOS WOULD HAVE BEEN WORTH ABOUT 25 MILLION IN 1970.

6. THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF SIGNIFICANT VIOLENCE ON ELECTION DAY. THE LEFTIST PARTIES ARE RUNNING CANDIDATES IN MANY MUNICIPALITIES. THOSE IN BOGOTA, ESPECIALLY, ARE EXPECTED TO DO WELL. THE LARGER GUERILLA ORGANIZATION HAVE MADE KNOWN THEIR SUPORTO FORWBNE OR ANOTHER OF THELEFTIST PARTIES AND ARE NOT LIELY TO PROVOKE VIOLENCE WHICH WOULD REDUCE TURNOUT AT THE ELECTIONS OR CALL THEIR LEGITIMACY INTO QUESTION. THE SMALLER URBAN GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS, WITH NO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 01760 241816Z

TIES TO THE LEGAL LEFTIST PARTIES, MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN DISRUPTING THE ELCTIONS BUT THEIR CAPABILITIES TO DO SO ARE LIMITED.
ASENCIO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION FORECASTS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA01760
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780086-0608
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780219/aaaaaphq.tel
Line Count: 140
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a2d7dad0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BOGOTA 900
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3493126
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UPDATED OUTLOOK FOR THE FEBRUARY 26 ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a2d7dad0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014